

STATE OF NEW YORK

4323--B

2021-2022 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

February 3, 2021

Introduced by Sens. COMRIE, COONEY, GAUGHRAN, MAYER, RAMOS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Procurement and Contracts -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to establish a construction industry advisory council on public contracting reform

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Legislative intent. The legislature finds that construction
2 contractors often face significant challenges when bidding and working
3 on public works projects in New York state. Often, the inclusion of
4 onerous or inequitable contract terms and conditions governing issues
5 such as contractor payment, job delays and dispute resolution, can place
6 an unfair burden on contractors in public works projects. Furthermore,
7 the legislature finds that many prior, piecemeal attempts to address
8 these inequities through individual approaches have proven unsuccessful,
9 and therefore a more equitable and comprehensive approach is warranted.
10 The legislature also finds that current inefficiencies in the public
11 contracting process are responsible for driving up the cost of
12 construction, making New York a less competitive place to engage in such
13 work in relation to other states, which in turn harms the New York state
14 economy and costs jobs.

15 Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to establish an inde-
16 pendent advisory council charged with (a) studying the current public
17 contracting process; and (b) adopting recommendations, best practices
18 and legislative proposals in order to reform and improve the current
19 state public contracting process, by making it fairer, predictable and
20 equitable for all parties involved.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 § 2. There is hereby created a construction industry advisory council
2 on public contracting reform (the "advisory council"), which shall
3 consider and advise on matters concerning the improvement of the current
4 public works contracting process in New York state.

5 § 3. The advisory council shall consist of the following members
6 appointed by the governor as follows: three members representing the
7 various state agencies and authorities, two members upon the recommenda-
8 tion of the speaker of the assembly, one member upon recommendation of
9 the minority leader of the assembly, two members upon the recommendation
10 of the temporary president of the senate, one member upon the recommen-
11 dation of the minority leader of the senate, one member upon the recom-
12 mendation of the comptroller, three members representing general
13 contractors in the construction industry, three members representing
14 subcontractors in the construction industry, three members representing
15 employee trade councils in the construction industry and two members
16 representing minority and women business-owned enterprise contractors.
17 Appointments shall be made within 60 days of the effective date of this
18 act. Vacancies in the advisory council shall be filled in the same
19 manner.

20 § 4. The advisory council shall elect a chair by majority vote and
21 other necessary officers from among all appointed members.

22 § 5. The advisory council shall first meet no later than 30 days after
23 the last member has been appointed and shall have the power to convene
24 public meetings. The advisory council may also meet at such other times
25 as called by the chair at the request of a majority of the members of
26 the advisory council. Meetings may be conducted via teleconference or
27 other electronic means.

28 § 6. The advisory council may also consult with other state agencies
29 and authorities, contractor and subcontractor trade associations and
30 their representatives, related professional trade associations, and
31 other experts and consultants in the construction industry, and with
32 such other persons as it shall determine necessary. Further, any state
33 or local government agency or authority that engages in construction,
34 construction financing or construction project ownership or oversight
35 shall cooperate in good faith with an inquiry or request of the advisory
36 council on matters germane to its work.

37 § 7. Members of the advisory council shall serve without compensation
38 for their services as members but shall be reimbursed for their actual
39 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in the work of the
40 advisory council.

41 § 8. The advisory council shall convene not less than 3 regional
42 meetings on issues relating to the public contracting process, with a
43 sole focus on the following subject matters, without exception:

44 a. Damages incurred by contractors, subcontractors and other parties
45 due to delay in payments by public project owners or managers;

46 b. Substantial completion as it is defined in subdivision 1 of section
47 139-f of the state finance law;

48 c. Public works contracting issues affecting minority and women
49 contractors and subcontractors;

50 d. Retainage in public works contracts; and

51 e. Contractual alternative dispute resolution.

52 § 9. No later than 365 days after the effective date of this act, the
53 advisory council shall issue a report of its findings, including any
54 recommendations for legislative, executive or regulatory action as it
55 may deem necessary and appropriate, and suggest best practices for a
56 more fair and efficient public works contracting process by addressing

1 the subject matters specified in section 8 of this act. The advisory
2 council shall terminate 60 days after the date on which it submits its
3 report as required by this section.

4 § 10. The report required by section nine of this act shall be deliv-
5 ered to the governor, the temporary president of the senate, the speaker
6 of the assembly, and the minority leaders of the senate and assembly.
7 The advisory council shall submit along with its report such legisla-
8 tive, executive or regulatory proposals as it deems necessary to imple-
9 ment its recommendations with respect to the subject matters specified
10 in section eight of this act.

11 § 11. This act shall take effect immediately.